

News from Rep. Stephanie Herseth
For Immediate Release
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HERSETH SUPPORTS BIPARTISAN BILL TO IMPROVE IMMIGRATION SECURITY

Legislation Would Eliminate Visa Lottery System, Remove Randomness from Immigration Process

May 25, 2005, Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth today co-sponsored immigration reform legislation to improve national security and make the administration of our immigration laws more consistent and fair. The bill would eliminate the Visa Lottery program from the Immigration and Nationality Act, thereby removing a measure of randomness from immigration policy.

Herseth said, "National security is too important allow this institutional randomness in our immigration policy. The Visa Lottery injects a level of unnecessary and irresponsible uncertainty into the immigration process. This bill is a practical provision that will make our nation safer, while preserving existing procedures for qualified, low-risk aliens to obtain legal residency."

Each year, there is a national immigration "lottery," which randomly chooses 50,000 aliens for legal residency in the United States. All other immigrant visas are issued to foreign nationals who have an existing connection to a family member or employer in the United States.

The bill, H.R. 1219, was introduced by Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) who is also chairman of the House Agriculture committee, on which he serves along with Rep. Herseth.

Rep. Goodlatte said, "I thank Rep. Herseth for her bipartisan leadership and her commitment to strengthening our national security. I would also like to recognize Stephanie's willingness to cross party lines to support common sense legislation that will ensure a fair and consistent administration of our immigration laws. The country is well served by leaders who are willing to look beyond partisan battles, especially when our national security is at stake."

A recent report issued by the State Department's Inspector General found that the Visa Lottery program "contains significant threats to national security from entry of hostile intelligence officers, criminals, and terrorists into the United States."

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